



News Release

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Wrestling with whooping cough — additional infection cases may have been exposed at state championship wrestling tournament

OLYMPIA — State health officials say four people infected with whooping cough (pertussis) were likely exposed to the disease at the state high school wrestling tournament last month. The four teens in Snohomish County have laboratory-evidence of infection.

State and local health partners have been watching for possible secondary infections since pertussis was confirmed in 15 attendees at the 2009 Mat Classic. The original 15 cases associated with the tournament were from Kittitas and Pacific Counties. Thousands of people from all over the state attended the event February 20-21 at the Tacoma Dome, leading to concern of secondary cases. When the original cases were confirmed, the state Department of Health urged anyone who attended the event and developed a stubborn or persistent cough to see a health care provider. The advice included anyone who's had close contact with someone with pertussis.

People who have or may have whooping cough should stay away from babies, young children, and pregnant women — until treated. Pertussis is common in our state — over the past decade, an average 600 cases have been reported each year. There are other whooping cough cases in the state that aren't associated with the tournament.

[Pertussis](http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/factsheet/pertussis.htm) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/EHSPHL/factsheet/pertussis.htm>) is highly contagious and spreads easily through coughing and sneezing. Initial symptoms are similar to the common cold — sneezing, runny nose, low-grade fever, and a mild cough. Within two weeks, the cough may become severe and can develop into coughing spells followed by a high-pitched whoop. An infected person can spread the disease from the beginning of the cold-like symptoms to three weeks after the coughing episodes start. Antibiotics can reduce the contagious period.

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The best way to prevent pertussis is to be properly vaccinated. Whooping cough vaccines are recommended for children and adults. Teens and adults often get a milder form of whooping cough, but can spread the disease to babies and young children who may not be fully protected, and are at greater risk of serious complications. Children should get five vaccinations between two months of age and when they start school. A whooping cough booster shot is now available and recommended for people 11-64.

For information on preventing whooping cough contact your [local health agency](#) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) or the Department of Health's [Immunization Program](#) (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize) at 360-236-3595. More information on [pertussis is available online](#) (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/diseases/pertussis).

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at http://www.doh.wa.gov for a healthy dose of information.
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